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1919

CASIONAL VERSES

By
R·H·HART-DAVIS



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THE REV. R. HART-DAVIS.

The Rev. Richard Hart Hart-Davis, who died at Caversham on Saturday at the age of 84, was the oldest clergyman in the diocese of Oxford. The son of Mr. Richard Vaughan Hart-Davis, of Hampstead, he was educated at Rugby, under Dr. Arnold, and at University College, Oxford. Ordained in 1866, he was curate first at Broadclyst, near Exeter, and afterwards at Sonning, under Canon Hugh Pearson, who, in 1876, presented him to the vicarage of Dunsden, which he held until 1904, resigning on account of his wife's ill-health. A keen campanologist, he was for 35 years chairman of the Sonning Deanery Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell-ringers. He was vice-president of the Reading Savings Bank, and while vicar of Dunsden, before the Old-Age Pensions Act, financed an old-age pensions scheme for the villagers. He was for many years a member of the county council and of other local bodies, and was a county magistrate. He was greatly interested in the welfare of cripples, and was president of the Reading Guild of the Brave, an organization devoted to their well-being. Boating and swimming were among his favourite pastimes, and he never missed, except when ill-health prevented it, his morning bathe in the Thames. He married in 1872 Mary Lydia Acland, elder daughter of Sir Thomas Acland, M.P.; she died many years ago. Their only son, Hugh, was killed in a mining accident in 1914.

OCCASIONAL
VERSES

Between 1893 and 1913

By

R. H. HART-DAVIS.

Printed for Private Circulation only.

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The Storm.

WHISTLE winds, and pipe ye blasts,
Wrack the clouds athwart the sky ;
God on you the duty casts
Earth to cleanse and purify.

Nobly ye your duty own.
Then shall man bewail his fate
When the storms of life beat down
On his unprotected pate ?

Hide not thou thyself, O man !
Let the healing tempest blow,
Let it cleanse thee, as it can,
And it only. Bare thy brow.

Meet it boldly face to face,
Let it wrestle with thy soul,
And from out its fierce embrace
Thou shalt come forth pure and whole.

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The Brook and the Hills.

NO voice of man or sound
Is heard the hills around,
With mist enshrouded breast
Earth takes her winter's rest.

No breath or sigh of wind
Can any access find,
No robin tunes his flute,
The wandering sheep are mute.

Only where intervene
The smooth turfed hills between
Steep combes, a murmurous tone
Of one who makes his moan,

Uprises fitfully,
The cry of rivulet,
Climbing the hill to me,
Whose banks him jealous fret.

Sad, yet inspiring, ode
To cheer me on my road,
And fine example set
To win whate'er may let.

Winter.

THOU jolly churl, come, Winter, come,
Abroad I love thy buffet,
And hie me to my cosy home
When I'd no longer rough it.

Thy day draws swiftly to its close,
Scant time for workman's earning,
Thy evening dowers with leisure those
Assiduous bent on learning.

When sinks the crimson sun to rest
The hours are my possession,
And with the room in comfort drest
I enter on my session.

Who pities me with book on knee,
Alone and unattended ?
Ne'er was I in such company,
So happily befriended.

For as I open history's page
King, Courtier, Prince, and Peasant,
Dame, Warrior, Sailor, Scholar, Sage,
Crowd round me, comrades pleasant.

I fight through many a fierce campaign,
I seas and lands discover,
I kingdoms lose, I kingdoms gain,
I woo and win my lover.

A place I take on every stage,
Homes enter high and lowly,
Acquaint I am with every age,
Things secular and holy.

So snow may fall, and tempests roar,
And frost the blood may tingle,
With book in hand, the hearth before,
What care I in my ingle ?

To a boy, aged 3, instantaneously killed
beneath a wagon.

DEAR Boy, three years, how brief a day
Thy joyous life was given ;
Thou camest, and turning on thy way
Retraced thy path to heaven.

Thou and bright joy and laughing mirth
Sworn comrades were together,
From earliest birth thy home on earth
Made round thee sunny weather.

No sorrow touched thee, darling boy,
No pain, no shade of cross,
Straight went'st thou to eternal joy,
God, help us bear thy loss !

Confirmation.

GREAT Father of Thy children, hear
Our voice of joyful praise,
For life, and all that makes life dear,
For home, and happy days.

Father, whose love to us has given
So fair a home below,
Who sent Thine own dear Son from heaven
That we the truth might know,

We trust Thee for eternal bliss
In world beyond the veil ;
For who that such a Father is
Would suffer love to fail ?

In the bright heyday of our youth
With hopes high set this day,
We own Thee Father, love Thy truth,
We mean Thy will to obey.

Help us to do the good we own,
And nerve us for the fight ;
Who wins in his own strength alone ?
Who stands but in Thy might ?

In all the change and chance of life
Be Thou our stedfast Guide ;
And in death's last and bitter strife,
Let Thy sure love provide.

Silver.

BEST of all armour Britain boasts
A silver streak of sea ;
Nature herself safeguards her coasts,
And helps to keep her free.

When roars the tempest fierce and loud,
When bitter blows the blast,
The silvery lining of a cloud
Foretells hope's dawn at last.

You fought to kill, or to be killed,
The foe is in retreat ;
A silver bridge 'tis wise to build
For guilty, flying feet.

One man amid a surging throng,
What can he do for life ?
But speech may be as Siren's song,
And silver words end strife.

When churls are rude, when menials mock,
And unkind give no aid,
No heart so hard, so stiff no lock,
But silver key obeyed.

Victors in games by field and flood,
Heroes in life's hard stress,
Who wit and strength for others wield,
Who win for wrong redress,

For such as these we grave thy face
In salver, bowl, or cup,
O Silver, and in words of grace
We sum their virtues up.

Would you seek wisdom in your need
Your doubtful steps to guide?
Go to the old, for counsel plead,
Let silver hairs decide.

Music more sweet was never sung
In all this mortal sphere
Than silver sound of lover's tongue
Falls on the listening ear.

As changing years roll on their way,—
Save love naught else the same,—
What memories leap up the day
They “Silver Wedding” name!

When the whole circle is complete,
Not one is wanting there,
Save she, whose memory smells sweet,
Though dead this eighteenth year.

Silver, for benefits untold
We hold thee dearly blest,
But yet of all thy gifts we hold
A silver wedding best.

Mother.

MOTHER, Sister, both in one
Thou wert to thy first born son,
Playmate and companion.

Hardly twenty years apart,
There was nothing in thy heart
Thou could'st not to me impart.

Staid was Father, forty-five,
Thou with youthfulness alive,
He full old, thou young to wive.

Noble was his face and mien,
Just his life, of all men seen,
Innocent, and fair, and clean.

But as heights where none can go,
Crowned inviolate with snow,
Seem to scorn all else below,

So he found it hard to bend
To a faulty child, and lend
Sympathy to gain wise end.

Then the full long hours of day
He must spend in work away,
So to keep the wolf at bay.

Burden sore for him to bear,
Turning converse into care,
His a fever smitten ear.

Son and mother left alone
They were close together thrown,
Naught of self did either own.

One their life, and one their love,
Each to other sought to prove
Love is best, all else above.

High of spirit, full of glee,
Mischief danced in roguish ee,
Like a free young colt was he,

Full soon needed he the rule,
And the fellowship of school,
And the rod that tames the fool.

Day of mingled pride and woe,
Curious, yet loath to go ;
Man oft meets the unknown so.

For the Mother who was gone
He poured out his heart alone,
And uncared for made his moan.

Now that little one is old,
Treasure worth it's weight in gold,
Is her Bible, thus enscrolled ;—

' Given to him in memory
From his Father and from me,
Eighteen hundred fifty three.'

Love changed not with changing mood,
Firm in fortune kind or rude,
Stedfast in vicissitude.

Lovers both they were and true,
But a bolt fell out the blue,
Untold sorrow e'er they knew.

Premature, without request,
Came an unexpected guest,
Cuckoo like in borrowed nest.

But unlike that pirate's young,
Tiny was he, and 'tis sung
Mother's ring on's wrist was strung.

Daily worsened she, and quite
Faded from her eyes the sight.
Would it pass, this darksome night ?

Oft her life hung by a thread,
Dear ones gathered round her bed,
Thought the storm tost spirit fled.

But God fed the flickering flame,
Slow, how slow, returning came
Strength to that sore stricken frame.

Then to climes which should restore,
Sunny bay and sheltered shore,
We our fragile dear one bore.

Malta gave her best, and France,
France la Belle, with gracious glance,
Generous did the gift enhance.

But the while those eyes so bright
Curtained were with shades of night,
What shall now give back her sight ?

Shrunk muscle, torpid vein,
Do they hidden strength retain,
At a touch to wake again ?

Shall these eyes that now are dark
Win once more the visual spark ?
Read the story in St. Mark.

' Men I see as trees appear ;
Every man I now see clear.'
Even so it was to her.

Step by step, the darkness broke,
As each mild electric stroke,
Passed through water, strength awoke.

But as one whose feeble gaze,
Peering through a cloudy haze,
Unfamiliar forms amaze,

So with focus false and vain
Naught to her at first was plain,
Objects now would wax, now wane.

Who shall try to paint the bliss
Which to darkened eyeballs is,
When there falls on them God's kiss ?

Who shall tell the bounding joy
After seven long years' annoy,
As she first beheld her boy ?

O'er him bosom-clasped was heard
From her spirit's depths the word, '
' Now let me depart, O Lord.'

Home came she in joyful wise,
Ah ! how soon those sunlit eyes
God would ope in Heaven's surprise !

Always dear, made dearer yet,
Mother, we shall ne'er forget,
That last year of loving debt.

Gone art thou from out our sight,
Where there's neither day nor night,
To the Father of all light.

As the torch falls by thy side
We now lift and wave it wide,
And seek God, whate'er betide.

The Husbandman.

“ I long to live to see an agricultural labourer strike for wages.”—COBDEN, 1847.

SERFS of the soil ! Ye sons of toil,
And ill requited labour,
Much have ye each the world to teach
Of love to God and neighbour.

Honest mid want, good without cant,
Hopeless, yet e'er contented,
Strength for life's task is all ye ask,
Aught else goes unlamented.

For wife and weans the scanty means
Of life ye scrape together,
With ready heart to bear your part,
Come foul, come sunny weather.

Patient ye plod ! 'Tis likest God,
Unhasting, and unresting ;
Steady and slow the long day through
From sunrise to sun westing.

Slow too of wit, town critics twit ;
Was fals' view e'er taken ?
Waters run deep that seem to sleep,
And little noise awaken.

Of Nature's lore you win much store
By study of her phases,
Vicissitudes and various moods,
And thread her 'wilder' mazes.

The quiet look in God's green book,
Intent to mark its pages,
Sees order there, and law, and care,
And takes its happy wages.

Love is your prayer. You gentle are
Towards everything that moveth ;
*For ' great and small God made them all
And very dearly loveth.'

Through every coast 'tis British boast
His home is each man's castle ;
Alone for you the boast's not true,
You are the farmer's vassal.

Home ! spare the name ! 'Tis very shame
That labour goes in fetters,
Who follows plough is forced to bow,
Freedom is for his betters.

Sinews and thews God gave to use,
That you may earn,—a living ?
A ' starving ' say, two bob a day,
E'en that with all your striving.

For that rich wage you must engage
In all to please your master,
Else out of home you needs must come
In four short weeks or faster.

Can home's true bliss, tell me, be his
Who cannot live securely ?
Tenant at will, he is thrall still,
In freedom's land bound surely.

* *Ancient Mariner*.—Coleridge.

When strength grows frail and blood runs pale,
And aged locks are hoary,
Holds good the saw in holy law
That grey hairs are your glory ?

Ah ! penniless in want and stress,
You come your state to mention,
A grateful land with lavish hand
Rewards you with a pension.

Pension forsooth ! 'Tis naked truth
And sorts with your beginning.
Two bob a day in life's hey-day
You once were hardly winning,

And now at last, when strength is past,
What kind consideration !
Five pennies' worth for your day's mirth !
Oh ! take, and thank your nation !

Ye whose limbs yet are sturdy set,
Bethink you of this ending ;
Some ills there are which men must bear,
But some are not past mending.

Then up and band on every hand,
In serried ranks unite ye !
Let Britain see how wronged ye be,
Britain will surely right ye.

But abject yield your foe the field,—
Squire, Farmer, Bailiff, Parson,—
No Freedom's day shall glad your way !
Go, slaves, your fetters fasten !

To little Annie.

DEAR child, how brief a day
Thy journey lasted ;
Some months, and then away
From us thou hasted.

Long years have passed since thou
Entered the far land,
But we behold thee now
As then. A garland

Of curls fell round thy head,
And rare beauty lent,
Dark orbs their radiance shed,
Grave, intelligent.

For thee the carpet lay
A calm ocean,
O'er which limbs steered their way
With strange motion.

A child's first steps ! No sight
More full of beauty,
A mixture of delight
And fearsome duty.

But e'er thy limbs grew bold
For such endeavour,
Sickness had laid its hold
On thee for ever.

How dear to parents' heart
The first word spoken,
The pretty, prattling art
In accents broken.

But not to us or thee
Was this joy given,
Not here was speech to be,
But learnt in heaven.

There thou in realms of love
A cherub angel
Dost all the pleasures prove
Of God's evangel.

Silver Wedding.

WHEN blows the balmy breath of spring,
And suns rejoice the earth,
When field and copse melodious ring,
Young Love leaps forth to birth.

All Nature owns his magic thrall,
Imperious, headstrong boy,
And youths and maidens straightway fall
Distraught with maddening joy.

Full five and twenty years have flown
Since Joe was plight to Jean,
And year by year their love has grown,
And sweet and pleasant been.

Fond memory reviews each spot
In fair Devonian's land,
Where eyes spake love, and needed not
Clear speech to understand.

A smile, a glance, a gift, a flower
Betrayed the secret thought,
And love proved strong to bear the hour
That separation brought.

Two summers came and passed away,
But as to him of yore,
They seemed to Joe but as a day
For the great love he bore.

Jacob and Rachel not more true
Cherished their love apart,
Than Joe and Jean each other knew,
And kept a brave, stout heart.

Rich guerdon came. The brightest gem
That shines in earthly crown,
Pure wedded love God gave to them,
And sent His blessing down.

Amid the storms and calms of life,
Hand within hand together,
They passed unscathed through stress and strife,
Secure whate'er the weather.

Eight arrows in the quiver set,
And round about the table
Eight happy olive branches 'set
In order serviceable.'

Eight branches in the olive tree,
One from the parent riven,
Eight arrows in the quiver free,
One winged from earth to heaven.

Thus cheered, both heart and will leap up
In sunshine of God's blessing,
For joy now fills the brimming cup,
And naught is gained by guessing.

Whatever chance and change may come,
God shall from ill deliver,
Life's journey end at last in Home,
The Father's Home for ever.

The Thrushes' Tragedy.

SOFT, beyond imagining,
Is the footfall of the spring ;
Who with mortal ear can greet
The music of her gentle feet ?

'Tis not as a victor comes
Heralded by roll of drums,
Pomp and pageantry of war,
Blare of trumpet heard afar.

Nature seems to show no change
Save the daylight's longer range,
Brown the hedgerow, brown the tree,
Grows no grass upon the lea.

Yet in the domain of air
There are who Spring's way prepare,
Pouring forth from liquid throat
Unpremeditated note.

So it fell in early March —
Still 'twas winter with the larch,—
Came a rivalry between
Two cock thrushes and a hen.

From high branch of neighbour trees
Strove each bird his love to please,
Spending all the day livelong
In one rapturous burst of song.

Meanwhile she impartial
Heard on either side love's call,
Preened and plumed her plumage brown,
Kept a modest eye cast down.

One day came a change of mood,
And of song an interlude,
When they met upon the sward,
And like belted knights drew sword.

They had run each rival bird,
Listened with bent head, and heard
The same worm beneath the soil
Moving in its slimy coil.

Each a sudden peck had shot
At the same seductive spot,
And the prey now hung between
Rival beaks upon the green.

' Mine this worm ! ' said one. ' Not so,
My beak gave it the death blow.'
Then with deep embittered note
Each flew at the other's throat.

Thrice in onset fierce they met,
Thrice recoiled, a moment yet
Locked with wing in wing uprose
Wrestling high in deathlike throes.

Suddenly was one set free,
Made a dash for liberty,
While his foe pursued him fleet
In the joy of conquest sweet.

Unseen jeopardy there lay
In the course of either's way,
Plate glass window stretched before,—
Crash,—two throistles live no more.

Many with the hen bereaved
Death so tragical long grieved,
For no throistle on the bough
Wakes the jocund echoes now.

Hugh Pearson. .

Vicar of Sonning—1842-1882.

PASTOR, counsellor, and friend,
Loved and loving to the end ;
Forty years had o'er thee past,
None more happy than the last,
As the apple of thine eye
Keeping Sonning tenderly.

Sweet the memories still remain
Of thy kind and human reign.
Dear Hugh Pearson, throned thou art
On the seat of every heart,
And though twenty years have set
With thy name men conjure yet.

Still it is a talisman,
Still a master key which can
Open every lock ; H.P.
Is our magic sesame.
Who can cite him on his side
Fearless may the issue bide.

What the secret of a power
Still unweakened to this hour ?
His unfailing sympathy,
His accessibility,
His warm heart that ne'er despaired,
His firm faith that all things dared.

Woman, man, and little child,
All in him were reconciled :
Tact, and strength, and playful grace
In his character found place :
Insight showed to strength the way,
Sunny heart o'er both held sway.

Gentle was he : yet when might
Sought to overmaster right,
Fierce strength woke in him, which cowed
Blatant cowards, bullies loud.
Seldom flared such flashes forth,
But they proved his manhood's worth.

Friendship's garland never knew
Flowers of more varied hue,
From more gardens gathered,
Than the chaplet round his head :
Wide the view, and warm the heart
So to charm : a winsome art.

As he preached the living Word,
Hope and courage in men stirred ;
For to friends he spoke as friend
Of a Love that knows not end,
But at last the worst will win,
Rescued from despair and sin.

Lives a ' soul of goodness ' still
In the human heart and will,
Needing but the Spirit's breath
To cast off the bonds of death :
Summon it in Christ's great might,
It will wake to life and light.

Ye who speak in Jesu's name,
And would fan devotion's flame,
First and last dare to present
To the heart encouragement :
Bid men rise upon their feet,
Thus erect their God to meet.

Him God called one Easter Day,
'Thou must rise and come away,
And he bowed himself, and said,
'Bid my friends around my bed,
Whoso would exchange farewell
In the village go and tell.'

Straight there came the old, the young,
Hearts to highest tension strung ;
Then each sorrowing head he blest,
Each one's hand at parting prest ;
Three full hours they thronged his side
For his blessing e'er he died.

'Son be good.' 'Old friend, do well,'
So the words of counsel fell :
Warning, hope, encouragement,
Each, where needed, comfort lent.
All confessed, 'Would I might be
When death cometh such as he !'

William Gregory.

ONE there is whose memory lingers
Bright and clear though years have flown,
Since he played with magic fingers
Strains as sweet as ear has known.

Came he when a youth to Sonning
Trained by Ouseley's skilful care,
By the Thames with proud stream running
Home for all his life made there.

To his lightest touches loyal,
Like a live and sentient thing,
Sang the organ music royal,
Prayer and praise to God the King.

Thirty years and three presiding
Led he on the village choir,
To fresh fields and conquests guiding,
Warming with his sacred fire.

Music 'heavenly maid' espousing,
Could he choose a sweeter wife?
Music, all his love arousing,
Filled his heart, his soul, his life.

Friends, who gave him rarest pleasure,
Sure to drive all care away,
Comrades in his hours of leisure,
Were the books of grave and gay.

Classic authors past and present
Filled the storehouse of his mind,
Wealth of thought profound and pleasant
Flowed to friends in talk refined.

Came the summons swift, surprising,
As his fingers swept the keys,
From this life to new uprising,
Heart throes changing for heart's ease.

So God gave him his desire
In his work to find release,
He has joined the heavenly choir
Who praise God without surcease.

Had ambition fired his spirit
Gregory had made a name ;
'Tis enough ; we know his merit,
And in Sonning lives his fame.

Old Michaelmas Day.

WHEN Autumn first strews the sere leaf on the grass,
There falleth the day men call old Michaelmas,
For sorrow and sadness it has not a peer,
And memory mourns it the most in the year.

For what is so dear to a man as his home,
And where do his footsteps more joyfully come,
When, leaving his labour, all care lags behind,
And peace inexpressible rests o'er his mind ?

How lowly soever a man's lot may be,
Secure he should rest underneath his roof-tree,
So duty be done, and debts honestly paid,
His home should be safe, and he never afraid.

Should he who toils hard in the sweat of his brow,
Come rain, or come sunshine, who follows the plough,
Fall out with the farmer, his home he must quit,
And e'er a month passes be turned out of it.

No court of appeal where the case can be tried,
The agent, the landlord, stand careless aside ;
What reck they while rent from the farm is secure ?
No heed do they give to the cause of the poor.

Work wearisome earning a wage of despair,
Home comfortless, mean, and in sad disrepair,
No home to a man who is tenant at will,
No land he can rent, not an acre to till.

What wonder the weak only stay on the land,
Men long past their prime, and the youthful raw hand,
Strength, energy, skill, in the country despised,
In the towns seek a market, and find their wares prized.

* * * * *

A day on the road for the horses and wain,
A day on the road to return back again,
Three hours for the pack, eleven more on the way,
Rain merciless falling through all the long day.

The goods of the household the wagon contains,
Aloft on the sail cloth a sturdy lad reigns,
The wife and the weans in safe corners are stowed,
All eyes and all ears for the charms of the road.

But not even childrens' high spirits and glee
Could live in the face of that dismal day's dree,
Their prattle died out 'neath the sky's silent tears.
And early fell darkness arousing their fears.

At length to the gate of an orchard they come,
Where dimly is seen their unvisited home,
What rooms it may hold, in what state of repair,
As ignorant they as the birds of the air.

Now high beat their hope that all trouble was o'er,
That food, rest, and shelter lay within that new door,
A few hours' work, and to bed they would go,
Though rain fall in torrents, and wild wind should blow.

Alas ! for their hope ! In the kitchen were seen
The whitewashers' pails set to make the walls clean,
The work in the bedroom had that day been done ;
What sorrier plight could be under the sun !

The bedding they brought and the chairs from the wain,
The rest of the goods had to stay in the rain,
And all night they sat there, nine wretched poor souls,
'Twixt sleeping and waking in front of the coals.

* * * * *

When hardships like these fall on innocent folk,
They would not be men did they stoop to the yoke.
God speed the brave heart who the city within
For love of his home seeks a living to win !

The Overthrow of Death.

THAT lived the Christ of Nazareth,
A pure, white, stainless soul,
Is proof enough for me that death
Is not man's final goal.

Sheer waste it were, vain, profitless,
That death should claim such prey,
That One who did all righteousness
Should pass for aye away.

The everlasting hills stand fast,
The seasons own their turn,
The dawn comes when the night is past,
The stars in heaven burn.

If Nature works her settled will,
Is Goodness doomed to die ?
Shall vice and virtue, good and ill,
In one tomb buried lie ?

So when the Easter festival
Proclaims the death of death,
It seems to be but natural
That Jesus still liveth.

If of God's life the very breath
Love all embracing be,
He must the victory wrest from death,
Man's last great enemy.

The Bells.

MERRILY go the sweet toned bells,
Their tuneful music sinks and swells,
Each bell, each round new sequence gives,
And change throughout melodious lives.

We will in the Belfry glance,
See the Ringers take their stance,
Rope in hand, each man is set,
Hopeful a true peal to get.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
Not one too soon, not one too late,
The bells each giving perfect sound,
Treble to tenor make their round.

But not long they follow so,
At the leader's summons 'Go,'
Handstroke, backstroke changes come,
Till at last the bells ring home.

Hand and eye in close accord,
Mind attentive to the word,
Bent as one man all the eight
Ne'er their efforts to abate.

Thus the perfect changes run,
Thus a well struck Peal is won,
As the music of the bells
Three full hours sinks and swells.

The Vowels.

WHICH of the vowels would you rather bless,
As tasting most of happiness ?
'Tis I which centred is in Bliss,
While E to Hell consignèd is ;
And of the rest this is the story
They all are found in Purgatory.

On the first return of a Liberal M.P. for South Oxon.

OLD friends for freedom and the casting down
Of privilege, who for full twenty years
Have fought unwearied, yet without renown
Of victory, what joy akin to tears
Is ours to reap the harvest of seed sown
With painful toil and slow, to find our bread
Of old on the wide-waste of waters thrown
Yet sweet and wholesome, yet unperishèd !
Heart answering to heart, hand clasped in hand,
A golden age we welcome in our land,
For now at length is heard the poor man's cry,
And Hope's fair bow is seen to span the sky,
Strong hands are stretched to raise him from the ground,
And honest toil shall be with honour crowned.

The General Election, 1906.

‘LONG burned the fire within me ; at the last
I spake.’ Thus after years of self control
And silent suffering, the vote is cast,
And from the conflict Freedom comes forth whole.
Free shall man’s labour be, untaxed his food,
Burdens too heavy lifted from the poor,
The land thrown open for the common good,
And wanton waste in war indulged no more.
A social revolution ? Yes, but mark,
No sacrilegious hand has seized the ark,
No breach of law, no mob’s infuriate fight,
But each man voting as it seems him right.
To Lords and Commons men commit their cause,
Trustful of righteous rule and righteous laws.

To my Wife at Cannes.

THE sad, sweet memories of times gone by
Tumultuous rise within me, for you move
On ground made holy, and scenes meet your eye
Which I recall with agony of love,—
Scenes filled with forms more dear than heart can say,
The fond, familiar faces of another day.

Oh ! land which knows but Winter's lightest touch,
Where suns eternal pageant keep, and seas
Empurpled lap the shore, and scarce as much
As move in ebb and flow ; where every breeze
Is fragrant with the breath of flowers ; in thee
At large once more what Paradise to be !

To thee has Nature given a sevenfold dower
Of all her beauties,—olive, fig, and vine,
The golden fruited orange,—every flower,
Which save in hothouse would in Britain pine,
Blooms here secure ; while field on field is set
With sweet tuberose or modest violet.

Then mount with me the rocky path and steep,
Which eastwards climbs up to St. Antoine's cell,
Where the good saint, high set his watch to keep,
O'er two wide stretching bays stands sentinel;
On either hand the purple sea below,
Above, the alps clad in eternal snow.

Not e'en in fancy can I view this scene,
But down the vista of the long past years
Peering, the forms of friends who once have been
Again I see, see through a mist of tears;
And yet hope on true heart, and banish sorrow,
Somewhere, someday, thou shalt bid them good morrow !

Some Reasons for the Love of Nature.

NATURE doth music make in hearts of men,
So that they sing for joy, and happy are ;
And if disquieted in spirit, then
The sight of her doth trouble banish far ;
Soothed, and at rest, they gaze upon her face,
And while with her no evil thought finds place.

What is the secret of this wondrous power ?
What magic art has she to work such spell ?
Can'st read the riddle of the thrilling hour
When, sick, on her thou lookedst, and wert well ?
' It is her beauty that awakes in me
This perfect peace, this happy memory.'

Mere sight of beauty, others say, ne'er brings
Such peace to men, but Nature's charm is this,
The mantle of soft silence which she flings
O'er all, the deep tranquillity of bliss
Which under her holds rule, a reign of peace,
Freedom from pain, and from all care release.

Others again will mark the pleasant toil
Which Nature gives to those who seek her wealth ;
Who plant, and prune, who plough her kindly soil,
Find in their labours guerdon, joy and health ;
A life thus innocent of guile and harm
Is, they declare, boon Nature's greatest charm.

Facets of truth ; yet make not Nature dear
Till they are closely linked with our life past ;
Grand is the landscape viewed from mountain clear ;—
Music of babbling brook,—the shadows cast
By sailing crowds across the sky,—the trees
Which tremulous sway and bend before the breeze,—
Or in the woodland whistling with full throat
The blackbird to his mate upon the nest,—
These lovely are, but fail the deepest note
Unless we can recall with eager zest
Some bond 'tween these delights and days of old,
Some incident, some friend, some tale twice told.
Nor is it only her sublimest hour
Which makes responsive echo in the heart,
Nature by rude and simple things has power
Our smiles to summon, and our tears to start ;
A humble flower, a sweet scent shall give rise
To many long forgotten memories.
Here in the gliding stream the baited hook
We cast for minnows in glad boyhood's day ;
Or the white egg of the king fisher took
From nest of fish bones set in bank of clay ;
Or in sweet dalliance toying, man and maid,
Sought the sweet harbour of the leafy shade.
He who has lived with Nature looks on her
As a long known, and dear, familiar friend
Whose features in him strong emotion stir
Of gratitude for blessings without end ;
His comrade she in sorrow and in pain,
She shares his pleasure, she partakes his gain.

But yet a surer bond does Nature weave
Her lovers and her own sweet self between ;
None more delightful can the heart conceive,
None more attractive, felt as soon as seen ;
No change, no shade of turning does she show,
Where'er, at home, abroad our steps may go.

We may make friends with one of human kind,
And learn to love him as we read his heart ;
There comes another, and our sense is blind,
We cannot argue of the whole from part ;
Each separate man we must by trial test ;
For love of one we love not all the rest.

But once some scene of Nature wins our love
The tie can ne'er again dissolved be ;
How far soe'er our wandering feet may move
With equal joy our grateful eyes will see
The scene repeated on a foreign shore,
And our old love will be renewed once more.

The motives, passions, thoughts are infinite
Within the breast of man that hidden lie ;
Each varies from his fellowman ; no light
Is shed by one on other ; if we try
To read all hearts as one, we do but grope
As blind men in the darkness without hope.

But study Nature, and you find her frank,
On all alike her favours she bestows ;
Nature respects no person and no rank,
No change, caprice, no alteration knows ;
Working by law and order guides her way,
The heart that trusts her she will ne'er betray.

He who has once in summer's sultry heat
A-weary laid him down in shadow cool
Of some wide spreading tree, beneath whose feet
A brook flows murmuring, with many a pool,
Then bared his limp limbs in the grateful stream,
And on the bank resought his lazy dream,

Is sure that Nature steadfast is and true,
And faithfully will foster him, when he
'Mid other fields may go and pastures new,
And see another brook, another tree ;
There the fresh pleasure shall be made twofold,
By the delicious memory of old.

Happy the man who with a studious mind
Has made himself with Nature well acquaint ;
For him she always wears one face, one kind
Of language speaks, which mid the taint
And tumult of the world falls on his ears
Sweet as the music of his native tongue
Heard in a far off land strange men among,
Heard with a glad surprise akin to tears.

To my Dog.

HE gave me all he had ;—a heart
Devoted, loving, true ;
A sense of duty in the part
Appointed him to do.

Instinct to know the right from wrong
We may not doubt was his ;
When he did right a merry song
Proclaimed his crowning bliss.

And when his will he would not bend,
To do another's hest,
A stroke would soon the contest end,
And he would stand confest,

With ears set back and tail tucked in
A piteous penitent,
Imploring pardon for his sin,
And pardoned, frisk content.

As gentle as the Spring's soft breeze,
Or sleeping infant's breath,
Patient he lets his master teaze,
And never murmureth.

The first to catch his master's voice,
Or faintest footfall hear,
His bounding form and bark rejoice
To greet his presence near.

You tell me he is dead, but I
Still feel him by my side ;
He lives with me in memory
As though he had not died.

His winning ways, his loving heart,
Are living forces yet ;
Ah ! comrade dear although we part
'Tis long e'er I forget.

New Starts in Life.

BALMY blows the air,
Sunshine sparkles fair,
At the vineyard gate
Men and master wait.

' Vines your labour need ;
' Prune, and train, and weed,
' Trench between each row,
' Labour strong bestow.

' Go, work there to-day,
' I will wages pay,
' Penny for each one,
' When the day is done.'

Here life pictured is
Bright and full of bliss,
Man beneath God's smile
Labouring the while.

Did we this believe
That we each receive
From His hands our work,
Who would labour shirk ?

This life's motive make,
Work for His dear sake,
Here is dignity,
Here true liberty.

Then each day shall bring
Happy opening,
New start in a work
That shall never irk.

Of all days New Year
Happiest shall appear,
As we take fresh road
Leading up to God.

Onward.

MEN in the evening of their day
Are often heard to cry,
'E'er the old order pass away
' 'Tis well for me to die.'

' Fear of the coming change I own
' Which casts its shade before,
' I dare not sail on seas unknown,
' I linger on the shore.'

And yet let youth and manhood tell
Of eager spirit roused,
Of fight contested long and well
For causes new espoused.

Then cheer thy heart, bear well thy part,
New times new measures need,
Rest none may see until there be
No wrongs redress to plead.

E. A. Gray.

OLD friend of forty years, farewell,
 Boon death hath burst the gate ;
What secrets hast thou now to tell
 While we in wonder wait !

Kindness and mercy thou did'st strew
 Around thy path below,
Now they are measured out to you
 In brimming overflow.

To lay thee in earth's kind embrace
 Friends flocked from far and near,
Thy gain, their loss, avowed each face
 Besprent with silent tear.

Farewell, dear heart ! Someday we'll hope
 Our friendship to renew,
And in a world of larger scope
 Learn nobler things to do.

C. M. Warren.

DID any bear the ' white flower of a blameless life '
 'Twas thou, dear Warrie ;
And now that kindly death has brought thee end of strife
 All thy world's sorry.

Not for thy sake we grieve, who, sleeping, woke to bliss,
 Thy loss is sorrow ;
This fills all eyes with tears, no more to give thee kiss,
 Or bid good morrow.

Sweet faithful soul, who to be kind, to bless, to heal,
 Wert ever zealous ;
Whose only fault, should others' help be sought, to feel
 A little jealous.

Our homely annals, and our uneventful days,
 Were all thy treasure ;
And were a date in doubt, to clear away the haze
 Thy dearest pleasure.

God takes not back His gifts. Keen is thy memory still
 Across the river ;
And, bound about our hearts with thy dear love, we will
 Forget thee never.

View from the Ridge Field.

ON the hill of Warren riding
Have I set my home on high,
While below with broad stream gliding
Fair and stately Thames flows by.
Southward look, the Valley spreading
Jewelled o'er with meadows green,
Then the towers and spires of Reading
And the Factory shafts are seen.
Giants in their strength rejoicing,
Engines course the metall'd way;
Whistles sound, enquiry voicing,
Whether to proceed or stay.
There are who declare their pity,
'Tall, gaunt shafts the prospect spoil';
But the sight of busy city
Brings the thoughts of those that toil.
And a poet's heart finds pleasure
In the signs of active life,
Joys that each man in his measure
Takes his share in stress and strife.
He is thrilled by Nature's beauty,
Loves her for herself alone,
But loves more the sight of duty
And of Nature thrown in one.
So on Warren's hill beholding
With glad heart we drink the view,
Town and country sights enfolding,
Works of men and Nature too.

My Pipe and I.

JONATHAN and David were
Bound in ties of friendship rare ;
Yet less intimate than my
Pipe and I.

Pylades, a faithful friend,
Loved Orestes to the end ;
Faithful we with our last breath
Unto death.

Everyday and all day, see,
Lovers never loved as we,
In each other's close embrace
Face to face.

Morning, noon, and eve we kiss
In a rhapsody of bliss,
Honeymooners ever, my
Pipe and I.

When my heart is blithe and glad,
When I am distraught and sad,
*When I ' pipe my eye ' in grief,
What relief.

*First to ' eye my pipe,' and then
Fill it, ' light it, take my pen,
And to work we two apply
Pipe and I.

Consolation, sedative,
Inspiration, thou dost give,
With thy whiffs my troubles cease
Pipe of ppeace.



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